

September 9, 2020

Welcome back to all new and returning students.

We are eager to have students return to their learning at GFSS. Teachers, administrators, secretaries and custodians have been working hard in preparation for opening. School is not just about the building but about the entire school community. We know that returning to school during a Global Pandemic creates concern and anxiety for all of us. We would like to assure you that student safety is my number one priority. As a parent, I can appreciate how you are feeling. We have worked with all partners to meet and/or exceed the PHO guidelines. School is safe, and I know that the school community will work together so that students can experience the in class learning that they deserve. I have spoken with a number of parents over the past couple of weeks, and I appreciate all of the ideas and support. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Stewart or myself.

Quarter System

Due to the new provincial start-up plan led with health and safety guidelines, we have made a number of changes to our traditional learning environment moving from a semester to quarter system.

In the Quarter System, our students will take 2 classes (1 morning & 1 afternoon) for roughly 10 weeks, write their finals, and then start 2 new classes.

Our classes will be twice as long - what students will learn in one class this year would have taken them two days last year. Consequently, attendance is crucial in the quarter system for that reason.

The Quarter System will follow this schedule:

- Quarter 1 - Sept - Nov. 13
- Quarter 2 - Nov. 17 – Jan 28
- Quarter 3 - Feb. 2 - Apr. 21
- Quarter 4 - Apr. 26 - Jun. 24

First Days of School

Sept 10, 2020: Orientation for Grade 8 and 9 students (morning only....8:30am to 11:30pm)

Staff will be in full force out front to welcome students.

- **Grade 8's enter at front of the school**
- **Grade 9's enter at the West End door (Boundary Dr)**

September 11, 2020: Grade 10, 11 and 12 students (morning only....8:30am to 11:30pm)

- Grade 10 – Side entrance (Across from sewing room)
- Grade 11 – Front entrance
- Grade 12 – East end (gym entrance)

This day will be a morning only session for students to help orient them to the new health and safety guidelines, changes to a new quarter system and code of conduct. We all share in the responsibility in creating a learning environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

Bussing information from SD 51

The New Busing Protocols form is VERY important for ALL parents to read and understand, and we must have that submitted before their children ride. With the Covid restrictions, they need to know that the driver will NOT be picking their child up if they show symptoms or if they are not listed on the manifest. We have been able to be so lenient in the past and that is worrisome to the drivers as they do not want to be leaving a child at a stop that isn't listed or sick. If they have to call the school or families to pick up the student, this will result in the rest of their bus run being late. We told the drivers at their meeting that the secretaries have attempted to call all bus families and all bus families have had to read and sign the protocols form, so there should be none of that.

Bell Schedule

In order to limit the number of students in the hallways and cafeteria, we are staggering both start times and lunch based on grade level cohorts. Learning cohorts of students (grade levels) will use the following doorways for movement in and out of school.

- Grade 8 – Science wing
- Grade 9 – West end (Boundary Dr)
- Grade 10 – Side entrance (Across from sewing room)
- Grade 11 – Front entrance
- Grade 12 – East end (Gym entrance)

GFSS Bell Schedule for 2020 – 2021

Grade 8/9 Cohorts

8:15 am Warning Bell

Period 1 8:20 – 11:30

(190 minutes)

11:30 am Release Bell

11:30 am – 12:15 pm Lunch

12:15 pm Warning Bell

12:20 pm – 3:25 pm Period 2

(185 minutes)

Grade 10-12 Cohorts

8:20 am

Warning Bell

Period 1

8:25 – 11:40

(195 minutes)

11:40 am

Release Bell

11:40 am – 12:25 pm

Lunch

12:25 pm

Warning Bell

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Period 2

(180 Minutes)

3:25 pm Release Bell

3:30 pm

Release Bell

Weekly block rotation is as follows.

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs
Week 1,3,5,7,9	AB	AB	AB	AB
Week 2,4,6,8,10	BA	BA	BA	BA

Breaks: Teachers will schedule break time in each class. Timing is at teacher discretion. Students can eat and drink in the classroom or go outside with their teacher.

Students are encouraged to arrive at the school as close to the start of class as possible

Lunch: Students will be given time prior to the lunch break in order to eat their lunch (without masks) in their classroom before dismissing for lunch. Microwaves will not be available. Students can leave the school for lunch time or wear a mask in one of several areas designated for lunch (no hallways). Students must maintain physical distancing with students outside their cohorts during these shared times. This includes using the Bistro or other common areas. The preference is to go outside where possible. Coming back into the school during lunch is only through the front entrance.

Student gathering areas at lunch

- Bistro – required mask (multi cohorts with distancing)
- SPED room – required masks (multi cohorts with distancing)
- Library - required masks (multi cohorts with distancing)
- Gym (bleachers) – required masks (multi cohorts with distancing)
- Gym floor (rotation basis) – required masks (multi cohorts with distancing) – limited occupancy
- Tent space (courtyard)

Technology Expectations

Because students will not have access to lockers, they may carry these devices in their bags. Students are expected to keep their devices away during class time unless using them for a designated activity with their teacher. Students cannot access their phones during class breaks.

Students are encouraged to bring laptops/Chromebooks with them to class.

Lockers will not be available initially but will be accessible later in the quarter once cleaning protocols are in place.

Final Exam/Assessment Schedule

- Final exams/assessments have been set for the end of each quarter (November, January, April, & June).
- A detailed exam schedule will be available early in the first quarter

Hallways

To start the school year, we will have one-way stairwells and directional arrows in the hallways. During class time, if a student leaves class they will need to walk according to the directional arrows and have a hall pass. All washrooms are at reduced capacity to promote physical distancing along with only one student at a time being allowed out from each class with a hall pass.

Masks, Social Distancing, Hand Sanitizing

Two masks will be supplied to each student and must be worn in the hallways and whenever they are outside their learning cohorts when physical distancing cannot be maintained. All efforts will be made to maintain 2 metres of physical distancing while in the school. With the number of students in the building, this may not always be possible but will be encouraged.

Hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer is **required** whenever entering or exiting the building, classrooms and washrooms.

Self Assessment

Daily assessment of children for symptoms by parents/caregivers, and staff self-assessment

- Schools recommend using BCCDC's Daily Health Check Example (on page 16) or the self-assessment tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/> If a student, staff or other adult has any symptoms, they must not enter the school.

Masks in the Classrooms

We ask students to follow all requests in the classroom. Some classrooms may require enhanced rules based on the needs of the classroom. As a minimum, we are asking all teachers and students to respect the following while in class:

- students may take their masks off while in cohorts, but any student is welcome to wear a mask at any time
- If a student is in a blended cohort, a mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot occur
- students will need to have a mask on their person at all times.

Student Desks/Chairs

All desks and chairs will be sanitized daily and students will wipe their desks and chairs each class when they leave to help keep our touchable spaces as free from contamination as possible. This will be supervised by teachers.

A custodian will be in the school for part days, cleaning high touch areas as well as a full cleaning at night

Assessment

This pandemic hit us by surprise in March and we made a decision, province wide, that assessments would take less emphasis for the remainder of that school year. However, this year is not a surprise.

Students, whether in school or online, will be required to complete summative assessments (unit tests and final exams/projects) in person.

Lates/Attendance

Attendance is taken for **ALL** students. The quarter system will go by fast, so attendance will be critical. Students who are home sick will be expected to contact their teacher.

Timetable Changes/Requests Process

Your timetable is currently live in MyEd and you can see all courses that are scheduled for the four Quarters of this school year. You received an email from our office staff describing how to access this information. Note that it is our priority to keep class sizes at a workable size and not all change requests will be granted. Moving the timetable to a quarter system has made student changes less likely however, we will attempt to support those students who are missing classes or who need a change based on elective choices.

Google Classroom

Last spring GFSS teachers moved to Google Classroom as a way to support remote learning. This fall we are looking to use this platform as a way to support student learning and help facilitate communication with students and parents. Teachers may choose to use Google classroom where possible as a consistent support for those students that may miss class and have a need to catch up.

High School Athletics and BCSS

Inter-school competition is currently not authorized according to BC School Sports guidelines. Team practices within the cohort framework will begin after the first two weeks of school and health and safety protocols are in place. Further information will be provided to students once school begins.

Grad Campout

A reminder to parents that this is NOT a school sanctioned activity. We request that this activity be cancelled or delayed until a time in the future when the virus is not a threat to school closure. According to the current Public Health Order, gatherings must be limited to no more than 50 people and can only be that size when proper protective measures are followed by those in attendance (2 metre social distancing and/or facial coverings are being utilized). Even a small outbreak of COVID could move us into online learning, and therefore, we ask our students to please be safe.

On behalf of all of us at Grand Forks Secondary School, we look forward to seeing you back in school again.

Brian Foy

Principal